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At the Top of the Chimney.

A man will go blind, and mad, too, from fear; I have seen it happen, and if you don't mind listening, will tell you the story. I was apprenticed to a builder when I left school, and soon got to like the trade very much, especially when the work was perilous, and gave me a chance to outdo other lads in daring. 'Spider' was my nick-name in those days, given partly on account of my long legs, for I had outgrown my proportions, and partly because they said I could crawl along a roof, like my namesake. When I was about three-and twenty, I was working with the famous Mr. ——, and went down to Swansea with his picked hands, to carry out a contract he had taken in that town. While there I fell in love with the prettiest girl I had seen in Wales, and this is saying a good deal. For a time I fancied she liked me, and that I was getting on very well with my love making, but I soon found my mistake, for an old lover of hers joined our men, and Mary gave me the cold shoulder directly. You may believe this sweetheart of hers (who was called Ben Lloyd) and I were not the best friends in the world; but I am not the sort of a fellow to harbor malice, and when the biddings to the wedding went round, and I knew that my chance was gone, I made the best of it; I kept my sore heart to myself, and determined to beat down jealousy, by being great chums with Ben.

I went to the wedding; and there were not many days when I did not steal half an hour to sit by his fireside, which was as bright and cosy and homelike as you'd wish to see—Mary being the soul of order and industry. It is not, perhaps, the usual way of driving out envy, to go and look at the happiness another man has done you out of, but then you know the proverb says, 'What is one man's meat is another man's poison; and so it was I got to look upon Mary as a sort of sister, and Ben had no cause for jealousy, although there were plenty of evil tongues to put him up to it.

The contract was nearly up, when a lightning conductor upon one of the highest chimney's over at Llanely sprang, and the owner of the works offered our master the job.

'It's just the sort of thing for you Harry,' said Mr. ——, when he told us of it.

I touched my cap, and accepted it off hand, and then Ben stepped up and said he'd volunteer to be the second man, two being required.

'All right,' said the master; 'you are the steadiest headed fellows I have. The price is a good one, and every penny of it shall be divided between you. We'll not fix a day for the work, but take the first calm morning, and get it done quietly.'

So it was that, some four or five mornings after, we found ourselves at Llanely, and all ready for a start. The kite by which the line attached to the block was to be sent over the chimney, was flown, and did its work well; the rope which was to haul up the cradle was ready, and stepping in, Ben and I began the ascent.

There had been very few people about when we went into the yard, but as we got higher, I saw that the news had spread, and that the streets were filling with sight-seers.

'There's plenty of star-gazers, Ben,' I said, waiving my cap to them, 'I dare say they'd like to see us come down with a run.'

'Cannot you keep quiet?' answered Ben, speaking in a strange tone; and, turning to look, I saw that he was deadly pale; and sat in the bottom of the cradle, huddled up together, with his eyes fast shut.

'You're not frightened, old chap?' I asked.

'What's that to you?'

'Oh, nothing, only we are getting up pretty quickly, and you'd have a better head for work if you'd get gradually used to the height.'

He said nothing and never moved. Then, looking up, I saw we were near the top—a few yards more, and we would be there; yet those who were turning the windlass were winding with unabated speed. A sudden chill ran through my blood, and set my flesh creeping. They had miscalculated the distance, and with the force they were winding at the rope it must evidently break when the cradle came in contact with the block. There was no time to attempt a signal, only an instant to point out the danger to Ben, and then to get hold of the rope, and by going hand over hand reach the coping before the cradle came up.—This was done almost quicker than I can tell you. Ben following.

The cradle came on; then as I anticipated, the rope gave a shrill pining sound, like a rifle ball passing through the air, and snapped. Down went the cradle, and there were we left, nearly three hundred feet in the air, with nothing to rest upon but a coping, barely eighteen inches wide.

Ben shrieked out that he was a dead man, and cried out: Tell me where I can kneel, Harry; show me where I can pray to Almighty God, for I cannot die this way!'

'Hush! lad,' I said; 'don't lose heart; God can hear you just as well sitting as kneeling; and if you try to get up, you will tumble, to a mortal certainty. Think of Mary, man and keep up.'

But he only shook and swayed more and more, groaning, and crying out that he was lost; and I could see that, if he did not mind, he would over-balance.

'Get hold of the rod,' I said; thinking that, even sprung as it was, the touch of it would give him courage.

'Where is it boy?' he said hoarsely; and then looking into his face, which was turned to me I saw that his eyes were drawn together, squinting and bloodshot, and knew that the fright had driven him blind. So, pushing myself to him, I placed my arm around his waist, and worked round to the rod, which I put in his hand, and then I looked below to see whether they were trying to help us, but there was no sign. The yard was full of people, all running thither and thither; and as I afterwards knew, all in the greatest consternation—the cradle having fallen on one of the overseers of the works, killing him on the spot, and so occupying the attention of those near that we unfortunates were for the time forgotten. I was straining my eyes in the hopes of seeing some effort made to help us, when I was startled by a horrible yell and bro't to a sense of a new danger, for looking round, I saw Ben champing with his teeth and foaming at the mouth, and gesticulating in an unearthly way. Fear had not only blinded him but crazed his brain.

Scarcely had I time to comprehend this, when he began edging his way towards me; and every hair on my head seemed to stand on end as I moved away, keeping as far off as I could and scarcely daring to breath lest he should hear me, for see me he could not; that was my only consolation. Once—twice—thrice—he followed me round the mouth of that terrible chimney; then, no doubt thinking I had fallen over, he gave up the search, and began trying to get on his feet. What could I now do to save his life? To touch him was certain death to myself as well as him, for he would inevitably seize me, and we should both go over together. To let him stand up, was to witness his equally certain destruction.

I thought of poor Mary, and I remembered that if he died, she might get to care for me. The devil put that thought into my mind, I suppose; but, thank God, there was a stronger than Satan near, and, at the risk of my life I roared out, 'Sit still, or you will fall, Ben Lloyd!'

He crouched down and held on with clenched teeth, and shaking. In after days he told me that he thought that it was my spirit sent to warn and save him.

'Sit still, I repeated from time to time, with aching eyes and brain for some sign of aid. Each minute seemed to be an hour. My lips grew dry, my tongue literally clave to my mouth, and the prespiration running down blinded me. At last—at last—hope came. The crowd began to gather in the yard, people were running in from distant lanes, and a sea of faces were turned upwards; then some one who had got a speaking trumpet shouted, 'Keep heart, boys; we'll save you!' A few minutes more the kite began to rise; higher and higher it comes, on and on. How I watched the white winged messenger, comparing it in my heart to an angel; and surely, as an angel it was permitted to come to us poor sinners, hanging on the verge of eternity. Up it came nearer and nearer, guided by the skillful flier. The slack rope crossed the chimney, and we were saved.

I could not shout hurrah, even had I dared; but in every beat of my heart was a thanksgiving to the God I had never truly known till that hour, and whose merciful providence I can never doubt again.

The block was fixed, the cradle came up again, and Ben, obeying my order, got in. I followed; but no sooner did *I* touch him than he began trying to get out. I got hold of him, and taking it in his head that I was attempting to throw him over, he struggled and fought like the madman he was—grappling, tearing with his teeth, shouting, shrieking and praying all the way down, while the cradle strained and cracked, swinging to and fro like the pendulum of a clock. As we came near the ground I could hear the roar of voices, and an occasional cheer; then suddenly all was silent for they had heard Ben's cries, and when the cradle touched the ground scarcely a man dared look in. The first who did saw a horrible sight, for, exhausted by the struggle and excitement, so soon as the cradle stopped, I had fainted, and Ben, feeling my hands relax, had fastened his teeth in my neck!

No wonder the men fell back with blanched faces—they saw that Ben was crazed; but they thought that he had killed me, for as they said, he was actually worrying me like a dog.

At last the master got to us, and pulled Ben off from me. I soon came round, but it was a long time before he got well, poor fellow; and when he did come out of the asylum, he was never fit for his old trade again, so he and Mary went out to Australia, and the last I heard of them was that Ben had got a couple of thousand sheep, and was doing capitally.

I gave up the trade, too soon after, finding that I got queer in the head when I tried to face height. So, you see, that morning's work changed two men's lives.

DON'T FREEZE THE LITTLE GIRLS.—A newspaper correspondent writes very sensibly as follows to a Chicago paper:

"In these cold, blowy, snowy days, I am pained to see the efforts of foolish parents to freeze their little girls. It is an outrage. Girls should be dressed just as comfortable as boys. On the contrary, the poor little shivering things are sent out into the streets, with their heads comfortably protected, thick shawls around their shoulders, which comparatively need no protection, their skirts standing out at an angle of forty-five degrees, and their poor little drum stick legs as unprotected from the blasts as the legs of a turkey hanging in a meat stall.—And thus we pack off these little girls to school, with their big heads to be crammed full of learning, at the expense of their legs, which at a tender age, are of more importance than their heads. As a general rule parents should devote their entire attention to their little girls' legs, and let their heads alone. The heads will take care of themselves in due time. The legs are helpless and need looking after. By taking care of the heads little girls acquire knowledge, such as it is, of music, drawing, all the modern languages, botany, the use of the globe, embroidery, poetry, and in general a little of nothing, and by neglecting at the same time their legs, they acquire colds, coughs, headaches, weak backs, pipe-stem legs, hollow chests, neuralgias and other complaints, which either send them to heaven before they ought to go, to be made into premature angels, or, if they live to grow up, makes them drag through a miserable, unhappy and unhealthy life.

And all this time you take your great, strapping hulks of boys, who are never cold, and are twice as strong and hardy as your girls, and wrap them up and fit them out in thick woolen trousers and drawers and heavy top boots. The result is, they grow up to be tough, strong men, and these little wretched artificial feminine creatures don't grow up at all, or, if they do, they develop into a sort of human curiosity, far better for preservation in a case of butterflies than for contact with the sharp edges of the world.

If I had the absolute power granted I would call together every mother of the city and I would whisper in their ears: 'Take those girls of yours and clothe them properly.—You have no business to embitter their lives with the misery of poor health, and some of you, I notice, are murdering your children. It is therefore ordered that, within twenty-four hours, every one of these blessed little girls shall have nice, loose, warm, woolen garments, her legs protected thoroughly, and her feet shod with thick, comfortable shoes, through which dampness will not penetrate.' And after the twenty-four hours, if I found a little girl running about in any other condition, by Eternal I would hang the mother for murder or malicious intent to kill. That is what I would do if I had absolute power."

A STORY FOR SWEARERS.—A gentleman once heard a laboring man sweat dreadfully in the presence of a number of his companions. He told him it was a cowardly thing to swear so in company.—The man said he was not afraid to swear at any time or any place.

"I'll give you ten dollars." said the gentleman. "if you will go into the village churchyard, to-night at twelve o'clock, and swear the same oaths which you have uttered here, when you are alone with your God."

"Agreed," said the man, "'tis an easy way of earning ten dollars."

"Well, you come to me to-morrow, and say you have done it, and the money is yours."

The time passed on: midnight came. The man went to the graveyard. It was a night of pitchy darkness. As he entered the graveyard not a sound was heard; all was still as death. Then the gentlemen's words, "Alone with God," came over him with a wonderful power. The thought of the wickedness he had committed, and what he came there to do, darted through his mind like a flash of lightning. He trembled at his folly. Afraid to take another step, he fell on his knees, and instead of the dreadful oaths he had come to utter, the earnest cry went up:

"God be merciful to me a sinner!"

The next day he went to the gentleman and thanked him for what he had done, and said he had resolved not to swear another oath as long as he lived.

Manton Marble, it is said, owns nine-tenths of the *World*. "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole World and lose his own soul."

Scientific Daring.

On a dull day in August, just after noon, a balloon rose in the air at the foot of Cleed Hills, on the western edge of the central plain of England, It was inflated with the lightest of gases which chemical skill could produce, and it rose with surprising velocity. A mile up and it entered a strata of clouds more than a thousand feet thick. Emerging from this, the sun shone brightly on the air ship; the sky overhead was of the deepest blue, and below lay an unmeasurable expanse of clouds, whose surface looked as solid as that of the earth, now wholly lost to view. Lofty mountains and deep, dark ravines, then appeared below; the peaks and sides of those cloud mountains next the sun glittered like snow, but casting shadows as black as if they were solid rock.

Up rose the balloon with terrible velocity. Four miles above the earth a pigeon was let loose—it droppod through the air as if it had been a stone. The air was too thin to enable it to fly; it was as if a ship laden to the deck were to pass from the heavy waters of the sea into an inland unsaline lake—the bark would sink at once in the thinner water. Up, up, still higher!—What a silence profound! The heights of the sky were as still as the deepest depths of the ocean, where, as was found during the search for the lost Atlantic cable, the fine mud lies as unstirred from year to year as the dust imperceptibly gathers on the furniture of a deserted house. No sound nor life—only the bright sunshine falling through a sky which it could not warm.

Up—five miles above earth!—higher than the inaccessible summit of Chimborazo or Dawngiri. Despite the sunshine everything freezes. The air is too thin to support life even for a few minutes. Two men only are in that adventurous balloon—the one steering the air ship, the other watching the scientific instruments, and recording them with a rapidity born of long practice. Suddenly as the latter looks at his instruments his sight grows dim—he takes a lens to help his sight, and only marks from the falling barometer that they are rising rapidly. A flask of brandy lies within a foot of him—he tries to reach it, but his arms refuse to obey his will. He tries to call his comrade who has gone up to the ring above—a whisper in that deep silence would suffice—but no sound comes from his lips—he is voiceless. The steersman comes down into the car; he finds his comrade in a swoon, and feels his own senses failing him.

He saw at once that life and death hung upon a few moments.—He seized or tried to seize the valve, in order to open it and let out some of the gas. His hands are purple with intense cold—they are paralyzed—they will not respond to his will. He seized the valve with his teeth; it opened a little—once, twice, thrice. The balloon began to descend. Then the swooned marksman returned to consciousness, and saw the steersman standing before him. He looked at his instrument—they must have been nearly eight miles up, but now the barometer was rising rapidly—the balloon was descending. Brandy was used. They had been higher above the earth than mortal man or any living thing had been before.—One minute more of inaction on the part of the steersman, whose senses were failing him, and the air ship with its intensely rarified gas, would have been floating untended, with two corpses, in the wide realms of space.—*Once a Week.*

ANTIQUITIES.—Ninevah was 15 miles by 9, and 40 round, with walls 100 feet high, and thick enough for three chariots abreast.

Babylon was 60 feet within the walls, which were 75 feet thick, and 300 feet high, with 100 brazen gates.

The Temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was 429 feet high. It was two hundred years in building.

The largest of the Pyramids is 481 feet high, and 663 feet on the sides; its base covers 11 acres. The stones are about 30 feet in length, and the layers are 208. 360,000 men were employed in its erection.

The labyrinth of Egypt contains 3000 chambers, and 12 halls.

Thebes, in Egypt, presents ruins 27 miles round. It had 100 gates.

Carthage was 25 miles round.

Athens was 25 miles round, and contained 250,000 citizens, and 400,000 slaves.

The Temple of Delphos was so rich in donations, that it was once plundered of 100,000 pounds sterling, and Nero carried from it 200 statues.

The walls of Rome were 13 miles in length.

Prof. Spooner objects to sawing off or shortening the horns of cattle. It gives pain to the animal and impairs its strength.

The best food for fattening fowls is said to be ground oats mixed to a dough with water or milk. The latter is the best.

Wild Beasts.

Fear of wild beasts, while large forests existed in the State, produced much imaginary, and some real suffering. Bears were very common, and sometimes very bold. The boldness of these animals on some occasions is illustrated by an event in the town of Addison. Mr. John Strong moved his family into that town in February, 1776. He had erected a rude hut of logs in which they lived. During an evening in September, while Mr. Strong and some of his neighbors had gone to Albany to procure provisions.—Mrs. Strong and her children, sitting about the fire, heard a noise at the door. Looking towards it, she saw the blanket, which served instead of a door, raised up, and an old bear protruding her head into the room.

A pan of milk was on the table, and a camp-kettle of samp had just been taken from the fire, intended for supper. The sight of the fire caused the bear to start back. Mrs. Strong caught up the baby, and sending the older children to the loft, she followed, and drew the ladder after her. The floor of this loft was made by laying small poles close together, which gave ample opportunity to see all that was passing below. The bear, after reconnoitering the place several times, came in with two cubs. They first upset the milk that had been placed on the table for supper. The old bear then made a dash at the pudding-pot, and thrusting in her head swallowed a large mouthful, and filled her mouth with another, before she found it was boiling hot.—Giving a furious growl, she struck the pot with her paw, upsetting and breaking it. She then set herself up on end, endeavoring to poke the pudding from her mouth, whining and growling all the time. This was so ludicrous, the cubs sitting up on end, one on each side, and wondering what ailed their mother, that it drew a loud laugh from the children above. This seemed to excite the anger of the beast more than ever, and with a roar she rushed for the place where they had escaped up aloft. This had been covered up when Mrs. Strong drew up the ladder, and now commenced a struggle, the bear to get up, and the mother and children to keep her down. After many fruitless attempts, the bear gave it up, and toward morning moved off. After Mr. Strong's return, a door made from slabs split from the bass-wood and hung on wooden hinges, gave security from like inroads in the future. But few, if any, of the first settlers were seriously injured by bears. But a very painful event did occur from an attack of wolves. Soon after Bennington was settled, several young ladies returning on a winter's night, from a quilting frolic, were pursued by a pack of wolves. They sought refuge in some trees, and had hardly secured themselves among the lower branches, before the fierce animals were howling beneath them. Suddenly the limb on which one of the party, Caroline Mason by name, was standing, broke beneath her weight, and she fell screaming among the hungry beasts below, which quickly tore her in pieces and devoured her.—*Hall's History of Vermont.*

FANNY FERN ON THE FASHIONS.—Oh, the relief it is to meet a lady instead of a ballet girl: oh, the relief it is to see a healthy, firm-stepping, rosy, broad-chested, bright-eyed woman, clad simply with a dress all of one color, and free from bunches and tags! I turn to look at such a one with true respect, that she has the good sense and courage and good taste to appear on the street in a dress befitting the street; leaving to these poor wretched women whose business it is to advertise their persons a free field without competition. If I seem to speak harshly, it is because I feel earnestly on the subject. I had hoped that the women of 1868 would have been worthy of the day in which they live. I had hoped that all of their time would not have been spent in keeping up with the chameleon changes of fashions too ugly, too absurd for toleration. It is because I want them to be something, to do something higher and nobler than a peacock might aim at, that I turn heart-sick away from these infinitesimal fripperies that narrow the soul and purse and leave nothing in their wake but emptiness. Nor is it necessary, in avoiding all this, that a woman should look "strong minded," as the bugbear phrase goes. It is not necessary she should dress like her grandmother, in order to look like a decent woman. It is not necessary she should forswear ornamentation, because it was better and more respectable to have it confined to festal and home occasions and less to the public promenade. She is not driven to the alternative of muffling herself like an omnibus driver, in January, or catching consumption with her throat protected only by a gold locket!

HELP ONE ANOTHER.—Sir Walter Scott wrote; "The race of mankind would perish did we cease to help each other. From the time that the mother binds the child's head till the moment that some kind assistance wipes the death damp from the brow of the dying, we cannot exist without mutual help. All therefore, that need aid, have a right to ask it of their fellow mortals; and no one, who has it in their power to grant, can refuse without incurring guilt."